

## News Release

# University of Minnesota Regents Approve Urban Forestry Program for U of M Crookston

By Dan Svedarsky, Elizabeth Tollefson, Kathryn Webster on Thursday, October 18, 2007

Crookston, Minn. (October 18, 2007) - A University of Minnesota Crookston program in urban forestry was approved on Fri., Oct. 12, 2007, by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents at their monthly meeting. This will be a new emphasis within the horticulture program along with existing programs in production horticulture and environmental landscaping.

"One of the priorities at the U of M Crookston is to provide undergraduate programs that lead to applied careers in the industry. At the present time, municipalities and agencies are asking for employees who have knowledge of urban forestry or arboriculture and we are delighted to gain approval to meet this need," according to Dan Svedarsky, head of the Natural Resources Department which will offer the program. Tree care and related landscape practices have changed extensively within the last 20 years along with the demand for knowledgeable tree care specialists. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) are leading the way in worker safety and industry education. Both have student organizations and support students with scholarships, intercollegiate competitions, school clubs and networking with employers at annual conferences.

Former Director of the Forestry Division with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Mike Carroll notes in his support letter for the program, "As an experienced natural resource professional in Minnesota whose agency hires field practitioners and interacts with numerous constituencies and clientele in the area of tree health and green living space, I am supportive of increasing the pool of trained professionals from an out-state campus (of the University of Minnesota)." Forestry Operations Manager Mike Fugazzi of Grand Forks, N.D., indicates, "Trees within an urban setting enhance the quality of life within that community and like other resources, need to be managed by qualified arborists to ensure this quality of life remains for future generations to enjoy. An urban forestry program at the U of M Crookston would benefit the University, its students and the surrounding communities in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota."

Not only will urban forestry complement the other emphases within horticulture but will also enhance the golf and turf management program since trees are an integral part of managed golf course landscapes. Students will take courses in horticulture and natural resource conservation along with course work in the physiology of trees, their diseases and insect pests and proper planting and maintenance considerations.

The new program will also complement the Urban Forestry Workshop which Phil Baird of the Natural Resources Department has coordinated for the past 23 years. "The U of M Crookston has become known as the go-to place for urban forestry information for communities in northern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota so we have a reputation to build on," according to Baird.

The lead instructor in the new program will be Sam Kezar, a native of Thief River Falls, Minn., and recent graduate from South Dakota State University with a master's degree in arboriculture. Kezar also operates a tree care service and is familiar with practical, industry applications. He is a certified arborist.

Articulation agreements will be developed to allow the efficient transfer of students from related two-year technical and community college programs in the Upper Midwest For more information about programs in the Natural Resources Department at U of M Crookston or call Judy Baatz at 218-281-8128.

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